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FALL & RESCUE

Boy's slip from Whistler chairlift captured in chilling video

metroNEWS

82 animals seized from breeder

SURREY

B.C. SPCA officer said all dogs, cats were in distress

Thandi Fletcher
Metro | Vancouver

Eighty-two cats and dogs have been rescued from a Surrey breeding and boarding facility that failed to provide adequate care for the animals, says the B.C. SPCA's chief enforcement officer.

Marcie Moriarty said 67 cats, 12 dogs and three puppies were seized from the unnamed facility on Tuesday.

"Unfortunately, two of the cats — one cat and one kitten — had to be euthanized as they met the definition of critical distress," Moriarty told Metro. "Clearly there were many issues with the care that was being provided to these animals."

She said the cats are primarily Persians and short-haired exotics, while the dogs include four French bulldogs, a Boston terrier, a Pomeranian with three puppies, a Chihuahua, a poodle, a Rottweiler, a Doberman, a Jack Russell terrier and a shiba inu.

The cats are being cared for in Surrey while 15 dogs are being looked after in Chilliwack, she said.

Moriarty said the cats were suffering from various medical conditions including respiratory problems, ringworm and conjunctivitis. Due to concerns about infectious diseases, she said the animals are not yet available for public viewing or adoption.

"This was definitely a circumstance where all of the animals on site met the definition of distress," she said. "There were both environmental concerns and medical concerns with some of the animals."

Moriarty said she isn't sure how many of the animals were being boarded, adding that she has received two emails from pet owners so far, one who boarded a dog and another who boarded two cats, at the facility.

The B.C. SPCA will be working to return the animals to their owners, she said.

As a warrant issued to seize the animals has been sealed, Moriarty said she couldn't comment on what led officials to the facility or whether it has been previously investigated.

WITH FILES FROM THE CANADIAN PRESS

Among the animals taken were 67 cats. COURTESY B.C. SPCA

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metro NEWS
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'I'm riding off all the strength behind me today'

POLITICS

B.C. swears in its first female indigenous MLA

Drummers, dancers and politicians welcomed the first indigenous woman elected to British Columbia's legislature in an emotional ceremony that saw Melanie Mark wipe away tears.

Mark wore her grandmother's traditional red and black button blanket to the official swearing-in ceremony Wednesday at the legislature that included welcoming songs from members of the Nisga'a Nation from northwest B.C.

Mark, one of two Opposition New Democrats to win byelections earlier this month, described the experience as empowering and a symbol the province's move towards reconciliation with indigenous people.

"This is such a surreal moment for me," she said. "It's hard to believe it's less than a year ago I decided to run. Here we are making history. It's really a testament of where British Columbia wants to go, and that's really about reconciliation."

Legislative Clerk Craig James said Mark and Jodie Wickens represent the 101st and 102nd women elected to B.C.'s legislature since 1917, when women received the right to vote and run for office.

Melanie Mark, MLA-elect for Vancouver-Mount Pleasant, sheds a tear during her swearing-in ceremony on Wednesday. CHAD HIPOLITO/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Mark was elected in the riding of Vancouver-Mount Pleasant and Wickens, who was also sworn in Wednesday, won the suburban riding of Coquitlam-Burke Mountain.

> Here we are making history.
> **Melanie Mark**

James said B.C. women now make up 38 per cent of members in the 85-seat legislature, the highest female representation in a Canadian legislature.

Mark, 40, overcame sexual abuse, family trauma and poverty to become a noted childhood and family advocate in her Vancouver eastside neighbourhood.

She once worked at Vancouver International Airport telling tourists about noted B.C. Haida artist Bill Reid and served as a deputy at the office of the province's independent children's representative.

"This is a very moving day for me," Mark said. "I've had lots of tears of hope and there's a lot of strength behind me. I'm riding off all the strength behind me today, including my grandmother whose regalia I'm wearing."

Attorney General Suzanne Anton welcomed Mark and Wickens to the legislature.

Anton noted that B.C.'s rich tradition of electing female politicians is continuing.

"When you look at the women in this province, the lieutenant-governor is a woman. The premier is a woman. The speaker of the legislature is a woman. We've got senior cabinet ministers who are women," Anton said. "Women have done well in B.C. and I'm very proud of that fact."

B.C. has previously elected two male indigenous members — Frank Calder and Larry Guno — while current New Democrat Carole James and former Liberal Marc Dalton are Métis.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

IN BRIEF

Trans Mountain criticizes interveners

Trans Mountain says some interveners broke the National Energy Board's rules when they presented oral arguments at recent hearings on the proposed pipeline expansion.

The company has filed its written reply argument, triggering the close of the record in the often-contentious energy board proceeding into the project.

The argument is Trans Mountain's response to written and oral arguments delivered by interveners at recent hearings in Calgary and Vancouver.

It says some groups repeated evidence as argument, while others attempted to introduce new evidence.

The company asks the board to disregard what it considers wrongfully introduced new material.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Man jailed for practising law without a degree

A Vancouver Island man is heading to jail for repeatedly flouting orders not to practise law without a degree.

Ralph Goodwin, 69, was found in contempt of court in December when a judge said he "flagrantly" defied a 2013 order requiring him to stop giving legal advice and representing himself as a "chancellor of laws" or a "law speaker."

Goodwin must serve 30 days behind bars.

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Aquarium sues filmmaker

LITIGATION

Charbonneau doc alleged to infringe on copyright

The Vancouver Aquarium has filed a lawsuit alleging copyright infringement by a filmmaker whose documentary was critical of the facility's treatment of dolphins and beluga whales.

Gary Charbonneau's documentary Vancouver Aquarium Uncovered was posted on YouTube and Vimeo, but he said Vimeo took down the film last week.

A notice of civil claim stated Charbonneau and his company Evotion Films Inc. used images and video from the aquarium's official website and blog without permission, and that he violated a contract allowing him to film at the facility.

A couple watches a beluga at the Vancouver Aquarium. METRO FILE

"The defendants have each been guilty of reprehensible, insulting, high-handed, spiteful, malicious and oppressive conduct," the notice said.

"Such conduct by the defendants justifies the court in imposing a substantial penalty of exemplary damages on the defendants, imposing an award of aggravated damages."

The aquarium claimed general and special damages. It said Charbonneau violated the terms of a contract allowing him to film at the premises when he used the footage for commercial purposes.

The facility is also seeking an injunction to remove the video from YouTube, the filmmaker's website and any other public location.

The North Vancouver-based filmmaker and entrepreneur said a fair-use defence would apply because he gave proper credit and used the material to educate the public about the facility.

"When the aquarium has to go to these levels to silence a film, then there's something seriously wrong," he said Wednesday.

"They can't attack the facts, they can't assault the information that's contained within the film, so now they're trying other avenues."

The documentary alleges that belugas kept in captivity have a much higher infant death rate than those in the wild and that the aquarium is buying dolphins from Japan under the pretence of a rescue and rehabilitation program.

None of the allegations have been tested in court.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

> **They can't attack the facts, they can't assault the information.**
> Filmmaker Gary Charbonneau

IN BRIEF

B.C. beaches get love

British Columbia's English Bay and Chesterman Beach have made The Guardian newspaper's list of best beaches in the world.

Vancouver's English Bay took the No. 47 spot in the "best city beach" category.

Describing it as a "mecca for families and volleyball players," it was English Bay's sunsets that seemed to impress the newspaper's writers.

"It's then that Vancouverites stroll in to sit on the huge blanched logs that wash up here and gaze out at the sunsets, glass or guitar in hand," the list reads.

Meanwhile, Chesterman Beach in Tofino was named No. 33 in the "best wild and remote" category.

"It's the kind of place where you might see kids pedalling along barefoot with a surfboard under one arm," reads the list. "With a bit of luck, and keen eyesight, you might spot orcas out beyond the breakers."

No other Canadian beaches made the list.

THANDI FLETCHER/METRO

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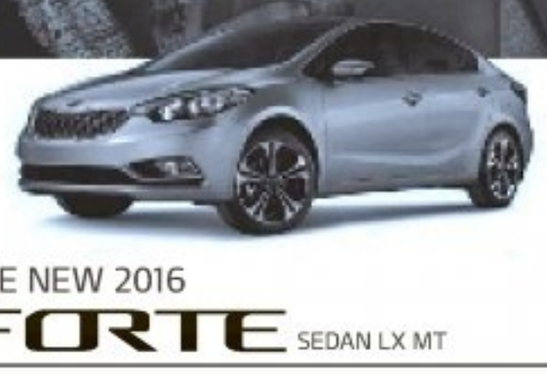

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Snowden to speak via web

COMMUNICATIONS

Whistleblower to talk telecom data at Simon Frasier event

Thandi Fletcher
Metro | Vancouver

National Security Agency whistleblower Edward Snowden will speak to Vancouverites via web-link about the power and perils of big data at an event hosted by Simon Fraser University in April.

The former CIA employee, who now lives in exile in Russia, will be the keynote speaker at the event, taking place April 5 at Queen Elizabeth Theatre.

Snowden, hailed by some as a hero and others as a traitor or criminal, made international headlines in 2013 when he leaked top secret information about surveillance activities conducted by the NSA regarding telecom data.

In this handout photo provided by The Guardian, Edward Snowden speaks during an interview in Hong Kong. **Snowden, a former technical assistant for the CIA,** revealed details of top-secret surveillance conducted by the United States' National Security Agency. GETTY IMAGES

> **No other leak was ... this revealing of the degree of challenges to privacy that big data may pose.**
> Prof. Catherine Murray

"Snowden is a transformative figure in the field of big data," SFU communication professor Catherine Murray said in a news release.

"No other leak was of this scale, this importance to global and national security, and this revealing of the degree of challenges to privacy that big data may pose," Murray said.

Murray said she expects Snowden to speak about how big data practices are rapidly evolving within corporations and governments and the lack of change that has been achieved since his leaks.

He also might suggest actions that citizens can employ to protect their information online.

Audience members will be able to ask Snowden questions following his talk during a discussion, moderated by CBC senior correspondent Laura Lynch, with other expert panellists from SFU and the B.C. Civil Liberties Association.

The event is being hosted by SFU's Public Square, in partnership with the SFU President's Dream Colloquium on Big Data.

GET INVOLVED

Tickets are $20 for adults and $10 for seniors and students, available online at sfu.ca/publicsquare/edwardsnowden.

POLLS

Clark's ratings stay low

Matt Kieltyka
Metro | Vancouver

Premier Christy Clark has an approval rating of 31 per cent, according to a new poll.

That approval rating is statistically unchanged from last quarter and pits the elected British Columbia leader in third-last among premiers, according to the Angus Reid Institute's latest Canadian public opinion poll.

Only Ontario's Kathleen Wynne (27 per cent) and Manitoba's Greg Selinger (19 per cent) have lower approval ratings.

Saskatchewan's Brad Wall (62 per cent) and Newfoundland and Labrador's Dwight Ball (60) top the list and are the only premiers to enjoy positive approval ratings.

According to the pollster, Clark's approval rating has hovered between 30 and 34 per cent since September 2014.

Her approval rating peaked at 44 per cent in September 2013, rebounding from a low of 25 per cent that March.

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BC premium scheme not 'entirely fair', says Clark

BUDGET

Revenues are slated to rise to $2.5 billion due to MSP changes

Matt Kieltyka
Metro | Vancouver

Premier Christy Clark admits British Columbia's Medical Services Plan premiums scheme isn't fair or logical a day after releasing the 2016/17 provincial budget.

Exempting children from the payments and raising the income threshold for full premium assistance by $2,000 was one of the government's top selling points in the budget.

However, revenues from MSP premiums are still slated to rise to $2.5 billion thanks to less advertised changes to premiums, such as the annual four per cent increases in rates and making previously discounted couples pay twice the MSP premium rate paid by single adults (which the government's own budget document says will result in a $14 a month increase in premiums for about 530,000 couples).

Critics immediately seized on the hike.

NDP leader John Horgan accused the government of playing a "shell game" and using the extra revenues to prop up Clark's new Prosperity Fund, originally intended for funds generated by liquefied natural gas royalties.

Canadian Taxpayers Federation B.C. director Jordan Bateman likened it to a family restaurant marketing gimmick.

"Kids eat free, but we've jacked up adult meal prices," Bateman wrote in an op-ed on the CTF website.

Speaking to media on Wednesday, Clark promised to address some of those issues in the next budget.

"(Premiums aren't) entirely fair or even logical," she said. "What we tried to do in this budget is, first of all, excuse two million people from paying it. So 40 per cent of the population will not pay MSP at all. That's the most important thing in the budget."

Clark said premiums will be cheaper for a further 335,000 people but admitted more work could be done.

B.C. Finance Minister Michael de Jong shakes hands with Premier Christy Clark after delivering a balanced budget speech for a fourth year in a row at Legislative Assembly, in Victoria on Tuesday. CHAD HIPOLITO/THE CANADIAN PRESS

> **What we tried to do in this budget is, first of all, excuse two million people from paying it.**
> Premier Christy Clark

Last week, Clark admitted the system was "antiquated" but said it would take more time to make wholesale changes to MSP.

Unlike the majority of the country, which funds health care exclusively from general revenues, British Columbia has yet to ditch the regressive, flat rate, head tax-like payments, according to University of British Columbia School of Population and Public Health associate professor Kim McGrail.

Keeping MSP premiums around is definitely a policy choice she said, but still only account for a small part of the province's overall health care funding.

Total spending on health across all ministries is forecast to be nearly $20 billion, according to the budget.

"Any debate (on effective health care systems) comes down to the distributing of funds," McGrail said.

She believes that when it comes to integrating health care services and improving communication between providers, there is a political will in B.C. to make changes.

INVERMERE

Teacher fired for texts to student

A teacher in Invermere, B.C., will no longer be working in a public school after being disciplined for sending inappropriate text messages to a Grade 11 student.

A decision by the Teacher Regulation Branch in January, but only posted online recently, shows Daphne Neal agrees to the permanent removal of her teaching certificate, although she was fired from her teaching job in 2013.

Neal admits to sending as many as 50 text messages to a student on a single day in December 2012, saying she was attracted to him but also admitting she could lose her job for sending the notes. She says she was intoxicated when she sent many messages but admits it does not excuse her actions.

In January of 2013, when Neal's actions were made public, she pulled the student aside and said it was a serious condition that could go wrong.

Neal denied sending the notes when questioned, only telling the school district she had texted the student to ask him to stop flirting with her.

Neal was terminated in August of 2013 and as of last month she no longer holds a teaching license.

Two other disciplinary notices posted recently by the branch include a five-day suspension for North Okanagan-Shuswap middle school teacher Karl Emde who violated safety policies in his shop class and used inappropriate language with students.

Vancouver teacher on call Elizabeth Martinson must complete a course on positive learning environments for several infractions, including allowing a Grade One student to leave her class and play outside, unsupervised.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Boy's chairlift fall captured on video

WHISTLER

Lucky escape as kid rescued at ski resort

Thandi Fletcher
Metro | Vancouver

The quick actions of a lift attendant and a group of volunteers helped save a boy from injury on Monday, after he fell from a chairlift at Whistler Blackcomb resort.

The 11-year-old boy slipped from the Peak Express Chairlift on Whistler Mountain around 1:45 p.m. after leaning off the edge of the chair to pick up a ski pole he had dropped while loading, the resort said in a statement Wednesday.

As the lift began to rise, others on the chair, including the boy's uncle, were able to hold him up before he slipped off completely, the resort said. Whistler Blackcomb said the attendant immediately stopped the lift and grabbed a piece of equipment called a "fireman's net."

With the help of other skiers and snowboarders, the attendant set the net up below the chair to catch the boy, the resort said. The resort said the boy dropped about six metres into the net, and was not injured in the fall.

The chair's safety bar was not yet lowered when the boy slipped, Whistler Blackcomb staff said in a statement, adding that safety is paramount for the resort. A YouTube video capturing the incident has made international headlines since it was posted Monday. A woman claiming to be the boy's mother also commented on the video

"Thank you," she wrote. "Hanging child is my son, very grateful for happy ending."

A video of a child's fall from a Whistler chairlift is making international headlines. YOUTUBE.COM

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SCHOOLS

High lead levels in water cause concern

Residents in Prince Rupert are concerned about the safety of their drinking water after elevated levels of lead were found in four schools, said North Coast New Democrat member of the legislature Jennifer Rice.

School district officials in the city warned parents after tests of drinking water showed lead concentrations above Health Canada guidelines.

Rice said Wednesday residents are now worried about the extent of the problem.

"There's a lot of concern, such as how long has this been going on?" she said. "What are the effects to my child?"

> **There's a lot of concern, such as how long has this been going on?**
> Jennifer Rice, North Coast New Democrat member of the legislature

Health Minister Terry Lake said the government is aware of the issue and is taking action. School water lines are being flushed every morning and filters are being installed on water fountains.

A letter to parents from Prince Rupert's School District 52 said steps are being taken to address possible health concerns related to lead exposure.

"Flushing programs are shown to be effective in decreasing lead levels at the tap," stated the letter to parents. "School District 52 has purchased and is installing new filtered water fountains tested and shown to effectively remove lead."

The letter stated lead in pipes and the plumbing components "have been identified as the source of elevated lead levels."

Exact levels haven't been released, but the district has traced the source to lead pipes at Conrad Elementary, Pineridge Elementary, Ecole Roosevelt Park Community School and Prince Rupert Middle School.

Lead can affect growth and development in children.

Rice said she's also concerned that broader water warnings have not been issued in Prince Rupert, considering the impacts elevated lead levels could have on young children and pregnant mothers.

The school district letter advises families to flush the taps in their homes every morning.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

IN BRIEF

Surrey worker stabbed trying to detain shoplifter

A 29-year-old Bay employee is in hospital in stable condition after he was stabbed multiple times while trying to catch an alleged shoplifter.

The incident took place in the parking lot of Surrey Guildford Town Centre around 6 p.m. Tuesday. The victim was able to hold the man until mall security arrived. RCMP arrested a 34-year-old man and charges are pending.

JEFF HODSON/METRO

Man charged in Maple Ridge shooting death

A man, 29, has been charged with murder in the December shooting death of a Pitt Meadows resident.

Peter Bender, 33, was found shot to death inside a vehicle in Maple Ridge early morning on Dec. 19. Police allege the killing was a domestic incident. An arrest warrant was issued for Randy Scott, 29, on Jan. 19. Scott turned himself on Tuesday and was charged with second-degree murder.

JEFF HODSON/METRO

What you see at **TedCruzForAmerica.com.** SCREENGRAB

Another U.S. senator gets pranked online

POLITICS

Unofficial website makes jab at Ted Cruz's Canadian roots

The U.S. presidential race just got a little more amusing, if that's possible.

The usual hallmarks of a conservative Republican candidate — religious devotion to protecting gun rights no matter how bad the statistics get, relentless mentions of securing the border, maybe some homophobic sentiment — are nowhere to be seen on TedCruzForAmerica.com. (Cruz's official website, tedcruz.org, continues to work).

Instead, the site is redirecting to the Canadian government's immigration page, which offers instructions on your eligibility and links to apply for citizenship.

Ironically, one of Donald Trump's most commonly used barbs against Cruz is demanding he go back to Canada, his place of birth.

The redirect seems to be an attempt to undermine Cruz's political views, rather than a simple humorous move offering Americans a way out if he wins the Republican nomination and subsequently, the presidency.

The domain has previously redirected to the Human Rights Commission and U.S. government's health-care website, featuring the finer points of Obamacare.

Cruz, and Republican presidential candidates en masse, have repeatedly disparaged "Obamacare". The human rights redirect could be a reference to Cruz's views on abortion and criticism of Planned Parenthood.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Republican presidential candidate Sen. Ted Cruz
GETTY IMAGES

INTERNET MISCHIEF

Website hijinks have been plaguing other presidential candidates:

Jeb Bush
Since Dec. 8, JebBush.com has been redirecting to Trump's website.

Donald Trump
Another website proclaims to offer Americans an escape route into Cape Breton if Trump wins.

Hillary Clinton
HillaryClinton2016.com is packed with mock stories including: "Bernie Can Do It," "Liar Liar Pants on Fire," and "Hillary's Gender Fabrications."

CALGARY

Zoo otter death blamed on pants

Aaron Chatha
Metro | Calgary

An investigation by The Calgary Zoo has determined that 12-year-old otter Logan died last week after becoming tangled in a pair of pants.

The pants were an unauthorized enrichment item given to the otters, according to Colleen Baird, Calgary Zoo General Curator.

"It was human error," she said. "It was given to them in the back area, they took them out to the pool and our 12-year-old male otter Logan got tangled up in the pant leg and unfortunately drowned."

Baird said two staff members broke protocol and have since been disciplined.

It's not the first time accidents of this nature have occurred at the Calgary Zoo, according to watchdog and Zoocheck executive director Rob Laidlaw.

"They've had a lot of problems in the past, with doors closing on animals and gorillas with knives and you name it," he said. "Hopefully this is isolated and not part of all those problems that occurred in the past."

Laidlaw said this incident underlies the need for every person caring for these animals to make sure any sort of enrichment item doesn't pose a hazard to the animals.

Baird said authorized enrichment items include clams, mussels and PVC platforms to jump off of.

Tall order to fuel, feed the north

Whether it's fuelling 120 snowmobiles or 120 soldiers, it's a tall order in the high Arctic.

Tim McCagherty, chief of arctic logistics at the Polar Continental Shelf Program (PCSP) in Resolute Bay, said the planning to supply operations like the Canadian Armed Forces' (CAF) ongoing Arctic Ram exercise starts more than a year in advance.

"We (had) a rough idea of some of the activities the CAF would be doing this spring, so actually in January last year we put in fuel orders," he said. "That was then procured, went to Valleyfield (in Quebec), was loaded onto the sea-lift boats and was received here in September of last year."

Planning to fuel up snowmobiles for Arctic Ram started a year in advance to keep costs down.
BRAEDEN JONES/METRO

Having that fuel specifically allocated for Arctic Ram and stored up north guaranteed the Arctic Response Company Group (ARCG) could take snowmobiles and fuel more than 150 kilometres north of the PCSP and Arctic Training Centre (ATC) compound to complete the exercise.

Without the foresight to ship the fuel by boat, costs would rise significantly if fuel were air-lifted.

"I believe sea-lift last year was about $484 per tonne," McCagherty said. "So in comparison, to air-freight — for example from Ottawa to Resolute Bay on scheduled air service — is about $16 or $17 per kilo, so (there's) considerable saving."

Out in the field, the reservists with the ARCG are eating Spartan rations cooked in pressure cookers over camp stoves, or heated by chemical warming pouches.

But at the shared PCSP-ATC meal hall, the menu more closely resembles a typical university cafeteria.

There's a variety of hot meals with everything from chicken dinners to roast beef, as well as chili and home-made soups, plus a full salad bar and an abundance of fresh fruit.

Perishables obviously can't be stored long, so flights related to the operation are filled to maximum payload and often serve multiple purposes.

"The ATC brought up a bunch of staff to prep the snow machines, to do maintenance," McCaghaerty said. "On that charter, because we knew our numbers were going to be elevated… we actually used the (plane) to move that fresh fruit product into Resolute Bay, and then used it to haul their members back (South)….

"We actually utilized that aircraft fully, again cost split between the two (PCSP and ATC) so everybody benefits from it."

The plane came from Yellowknife, the northernmost hub that receives truck-transported goods.

Food costs out of there are "a little bit more expensive" than Edmonton or Winnipeg, "but not considerably more expensive" because of the road access into Yellowknife.

COSTS

Prices in Iqaluit:
- 1 L of milk: $2.50
- Loaf of white bread: $5
- Head of lettuce: $4

1 **Danish aid worker Anja Ringgren Lovén and "Hope,"** saved from the streets of Nigeria.

2 **Toddler Hope** was abandoned by his family and left to die after he was accused of witchcraft.

3 **"Hope is getting so much better,"** Lovén says.

ALL PHOTOS: COURTESY ANJA RINGGREN LOVÉN

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Nigerian 'witch' boy rescued

Photos of a starving Nigerian toddler have inspired a flood of donations to a little-known aid organization that seeks to rescue the growing number of children accused of witchcraft.

Danish aid worker Anja Ringgren Lovén posted photos of the emaciated little boy, whom she named "Hope," on Facebook on Jan. 31. Lovén had received a tip that Hope, who was no older than three years old, was abandoned by his family and left to die in the streets after he was accused of witchcraft.

"When we heard that the child was only two to three years old, we did not hesitate," Lovén told Huffington Post UK.

> When we heard that the child was only two to three years old, we did not hesitate.
> Anja Ringgren Lovén

"A child that young cannot survive a long time alone on the streets. We immediately prepared a rescue mission."

Lovén founded the African Children's Aid Education and Development Foundation (ACAEDF) three years ago after travelling to Nigeria and being confronted with dozens of children such as Hope, she told the Huffington Post.

Hope was not her first rescue. In 2014, many media outlets reported that ACAEDF had rescued two eight-year-old children who were accused of witchcraft by their family and tortured.

Poverty, the AIDS epidemic and wars have helped fuel the belief in witchcraft in sub-Saharan Africa, according to a 2010 report by UNICEF.

Often, children are blamed by those closest to them — their parents or guardians — for tragedies that are beyond their control, such as the death of a relative.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

The heat is on across the globe

METEOROLOGY

'Extraordinarily hot' weather is tied to climate change: Expert

Global average temperatures hit a record high last month, according to data released by NASA.

A record-breaking anomaly — an increase of 1.13 C — was also observed in January compared to the average temperature recorded between 1951 and 1980, NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies reported this week.

"It's a snapshot into the future," Deborah Harford, executive director of the Adaption to Climate Change team at Simon Fraser University, said about the value of the data.

"It's useful because it can help us plan now for what we need to prepare for. One of the major changes in climate projected by climate models is that we'll have warmer, wetter winters. The fact that it's a hotter January is a good example of that," Harford said.

She said "extraordinarily hot" weather in recent years is tied to man-made climate change and processes like El Niño and the Pacific Decadal Oscillation, an El Niño-like pattern of ocean temperature changes in the Pacific Ocean basin.

A large band of territory across northern Canada, Alaska, Russia and the Arctic experienced the most pronounced warming last month, a map based on the recent NASA data showed. Temperatures in that area were 4 to 12.9 C warmer than the 1951-to-1980 average, NASA found.

According to Paul Beckwith, a part-time professor at the University of Ottawa specializing in abrupt climate change, the high Arctic is warming between five to eight times faster than the global average.

Beckwith said that warming in the Arctic is changing the behaviour of jet streams, which in turn influences the frequency, severity and duration of extreme weather events like torrential rains and droughts.

12.9 C

Temperatures in **northern Canada, Alaska, Russia and the Arctic** were 4 to 12.9 C warmer than the 1951-to-1980 average, NASA found.

Large parts of Canada have had very warm weather so far this winter, for example, while the East Coast has been hit with severe snowstorms due in large part to the evaporation of warmer surface water in the Atlantic Ocean, he said.

"The key point is the Arctic: What happens in the Arctic doesn't stay in the Arctic," Beckwith said.

And for the first time, global temperatures in 2015 were approximately 1 C above pre-industrial levels.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

REPUBLICAN RACE

'Torture works,' says Trump

"Torture works," Republican presidential front-runner Donald Trump declared Wednesday, repeating his vow to bring back waterboarding and approve other, tougher interrogation techniques.

"Don't tell me it doesn't work. Torture works, OK folks?" the brash billionaire told a crowd in South Carolina, site of the next Republican primary on Saturday.

Trump has repeatedly advocated enhanced interrogation techniques for foreign prisoners, and he said again Wednesday he would "absolutely" allow waterboarding, which simulates the feeling of drowning.

"But we should go much stronger than waterboarding," he said. "That's the way I feel. They're chopping off heads. Believe me, we should go much stronger because our country's in trouble, we're in danger. We have people that want to do really bad things.

> Waterboarding is fine, but it's not nearly tough enough.
> Donald Trump

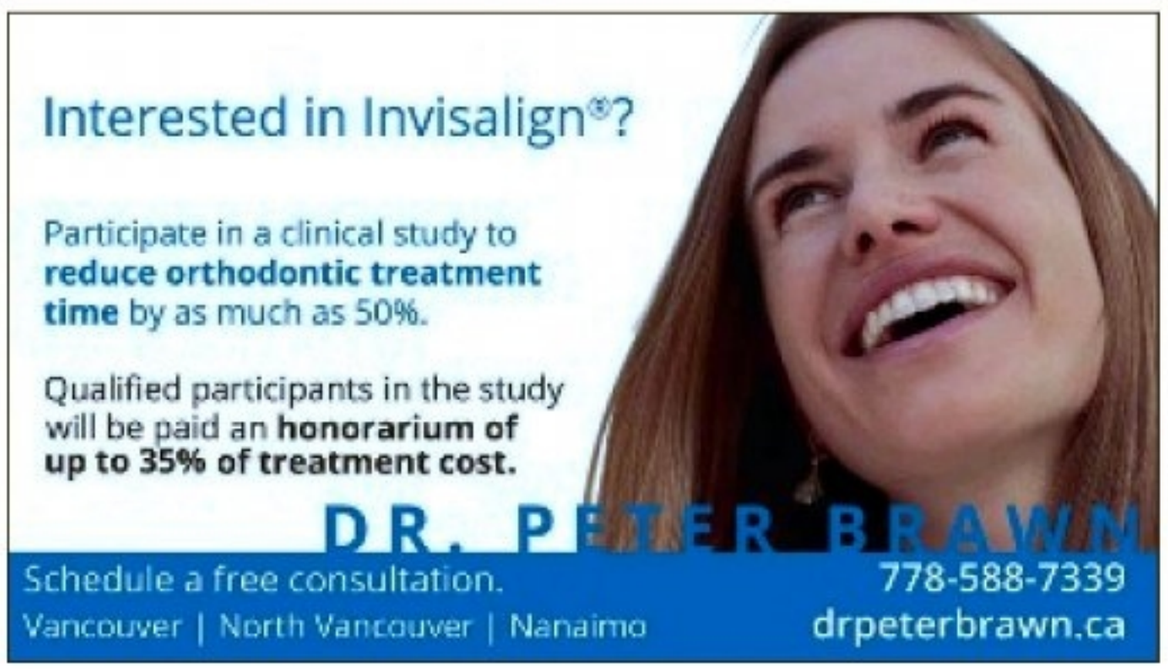
"Waterboarding is fine, but it's not nearly tough enough," he added.

Waterboarding was practised until late in the George W. Bush administration but was disavowed by President Barack Obama. A 2014 Senate Intelligence Committee report concluded that harsh interrogation techniques failed to produce information the CIA couldn't have obtained elsewhere or didn't already have.

Trump's comments could further alarm some Republican leaders, who fear Trump or Texas Sen. Ted Cruz will collect the delegates needed to secure the party's nomination before a more mainstream candidate can consolidate voters' support. So-called establishment Republicans worry that Trump or Cruz could jeopardize the party's chances of winning in November's general election.

"We do need to get the field down to Trump, Cruz and somebody," said Henry Barbour, a Republican National Committee heavyweight from Mississippi.

Candidates Jeb Bush, John Kasich and Marco Rubio are jostling to be that more mainstream candidate. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS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YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

Your daily crossword and Sudoku answers from the play page.

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8	7	6	5	9	4	1	2	3
1	4	3	6	2	7	9	5	8
7	5	1	2	6	9	8	3	4
6	3	2	7	4	8	5	1	9
9	8	4	3	5	1	2	6	7
2	1	8	4	7	6	3	9	5
4	9	7	1	3	5	6	8	2
3	6	5	9	8	2	4	7	1

Ikea eyes Canadian furniture recycling

HOME DECORATING

Expansion of retail giant's initiative part of green push

Ikea is looking at bringing a "take back" program to Canada that would allow customers to trade furniture purchased from the Swedish furniture giant in exchange for store credit.

Under the initiative, mirrored after similar environmentally friendly initiatives in France and Belgium, the retailer would then resell the items or recycle them.

"If we can have an impact on people's lives at home, we could have a huge impact on the environment," said Ikea Canada president Stefan Sjostrand at the opening of a pickup and order location in Whitby, Ont.

Sjostrand was part of the team that brought the program to France, and says the same could be done in Canada, where Ikea operates 12 stores and three pickup and order locations.

Ikea is looking at bringing a "take back" program to Canada that would allow customers to trade furniture purchased from Ikea in exchange for store credit. DANE COOTE/THE CANADIAN PRESS

He conceded, however, that the program could still be years away because Canadian stores don't have the capabilities to take back items now, even if only 10 per cent, or 2.7 million customers, returned their old furniture.

Last year, Ikea Canada had 25 million visitors in its stores and 75 million visits online.

The proposed initiative comes after Steve Howard, the head of sustainability at Ikea, told a conference in January that appetite for home furnishings in western countries has hit its "peak," prompting the world's largest furniture retailer to look at ways to encourage Ikea customers to repair and recycle.

Sjostrand said Ikea already has recycling programs for plastics, paper, light bulbs and mattresses in place in Canada, and was also the first retailer in the country to phase out the sale of incandescent light bulbs in favour of energy-saving LED bulbs.

Although it's taking a more planet-friendly approach to commerce, Sjostrand said this won't slow down its plan to open 12 more full-size stores over the next decade in Canada. The next location was recently announced for Halifax. THE CANADIAN PRESS

BOMBARDIER

Company to lay off 7,000; inks jet deal

Bombardier is implementing one of the deepest job cuts in its history by eliminating 7,000 positions — including more than a third in Canada — though it took pains Wednesday to train the spotlight on a large plane order with Air Canada.

3,200

Of the 7,000 jobs, about **3,200 will be from the rail division.**

The layoffs represent close to 10 per cent of Bombardier's global workforce and are expected to take place over the next two years.

"Today I feel we have done our homework," CEO Alain Bellemare said. "We are at the right place and I feel good about our ability to turn Bombardier around."

Amid the bad news, there was a sign that Bombardier could be reviving its fortunes: a letter of intent that could see Air Canada buy 45 CSeries 300 planes.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

UNITED STATES

Apple plans to fight order to unlock gunman's iPhone

Apple Inc. CEO Tim Cook says his company will fight a federal magistrate's order to help the FBI hack into an encrypted iPhone belonging to one of the San Bernardino, Calif., shooters. The company said that could potentially undermine encryption for millions of other users.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Thursday, February 18, 2016

CHANTAL HÉBERT: ON THE ASSISTED-SUICIDE VANGUARD

In contrast with comparable debates, this one will see the Liberal party break with the tradition of allowing its MPs — even when it is in government — to vote freely on so-called issues of conscience.

When the House of Commons votes on medically assisted suicide later this year, it will be making history in two controversial ways.

So far, only a handful of countries have included the option of assisted suicide in their end-of-life medical protocol. The upcoming federal legislation will be taking Canada in relatively uncharted social policy waters.

And then in contrast with comparable debates pertaining to the death penalty, abortion rights and same-sex marriage, this one will see the Liberal party break with the tradition of allowing its MPs — even when it is in government — to vote freely on so-called issues of conscience.

It is hard to quarrel with the notion that medically assisted suicide falls in the limited category of policies that stand to go against the deeply held personal convictions of some MPs. When it adopted a provincial law along similar lines, the Quebec national assembly held a free vote.

At the federal level, the Conservatives will not impose a party line on their MPs. Nor will the NDP. In contrast with reproductive rights, the New Democrats have historically not championed medically assisted suicide. They, like their Conservative colleagues, will be free to make up their own minds as to whether to support the bill.

A government that cannot automatically count on its majority to get its way is more likely to be receptive to the arguments of all MPs.

But the Liberal decision to forego a free vote is part of a broader change designed to ensure Justin Trudeau's caucus walks the talk of the party's professed commitment to charter rights. That was not always the case in the past with divisions surfacing on votes on abortion and gay rights.

The new approach was part and parcel of the recent Liberal platform.

It could also be argued that forcing the party line on the majority Liberals removes any uncertainty as to the fate of the bill in the Commons.

The last time the House pronounced on the issue of medically assisted suicide an overwhelming majority of MPs — including an equally overwhelming majority of Liberals — voted against it by a margin of 228 to 59.

But that was at a time when the Supreme Court still held that the ban on the procedure was constitutional. Since then the top court has reversed itself.

Based on the recent past, that reversal would be grounds for many MPs to reconsider their position, regardless of whether the vote was a free one.

After the courts ruled in favour of same-sex marriage a bit more than a decade ago, many MPs who had previously supported the definition of marriage as a union between a man and a woman changed their stance.

To make supporting the bill even easier, MPs will not actually be asked to give the green light to medically assisted suicide. That ship sailed when the Supreme Court struck down the Criminal Code sections that prohibited it.

The main purpose of the federal legislation currently being drafted against a court-imposed June deadline is to avoid a patchwork system of end-of-life care by putting in place a common national framework.

All that being said, in its quest to present a united front on an issue involving a charter right, Trudeau's government may be doing a disservice to the debate and to the legislation that will result from it.

A government that cannot automatically count on its majority to get its way is more likely to be receptive to the arguments of all MPs. The opposition parties, in return, are more likely to feel they have a stake in the resulting legislation.

One of the strengths of the Quebec law is that it was supported freely by a majority of MNAs of every political stripe. The four parties came away from the discussion feeling they had all had real input in the process.

As a result, the Quebec law is not at the mercy of a change in government and — even as it remains controversial in some circles — it is hard to make a case that is the product of an artificially imposed consensus.

And then, in contrast with their elected colleagues, all senators will be free to vote as they please on the legislation. By foregoing a free vote in the House of Commons, Trudeau is inviting the groups that are lobbying against the measure to make their stand in the upper house.

Chantal Hébert is a national affairs writer. Her column appears in Metro every Thursday.

THE MICROTREND: A stitch in time

Embroidery, for centuries practically the only fine art form open to women, has gained a very 21st-century champion: Taylor Swift. The pop diva had a hoodie hand-stitched whimsically with her nickname, TayTay, and like many things rustic and retro, it was an instant hit on social media. Decorative sewing — on pillows, dish towels, wall hangings, clothes — was once an activity reserved for refined ladies in drawing rooms. Now it has taken on a decidedly punk flair (a related fad is "crass stitch." It's exactly what it sounds like). Major designers are releasing lines of embellished denim for spring, inspired perhaps by the ever-more-elaborate needlework showcased on Pinterest and Instagram. Much of it is designed digitally, then meticulously hand-sewn. And seemingly everybody is lining up to learn how: At an upcoming workshop in Toronto (two straight days of sewing!), the list of people interested outnumbers available spots by a factor of 20.

SOURCE: THE TELEGRAPH; PHOTO: DREAMALITTLEBIGGER.COM

ROSEMARY WESTWOOD

metroview

No government has any business deciding who's press.

One year ago, Ezra Levant, king of right-wing punditry, launched a news website to "light a candle" after the death of Sun News Network.

He called it The Rebel, and promised to "rebel against the smug mainstream media.... Rebel against the idea that Jian Ghomeshi and Brian Williams are real journalists, but we're not, because we're direct-to-the-Internet."

Ghomeshi had been fired months before, but it was otherwise a prophetic statement: On Tuesday, Alberta's NDP government deemed that, no, The Rebel's staff are not real journalists.

"If you have testified under oath that you are not a journalist" — a disingenuous reference to Levant's claim to be a pundit, not a reporter — "then we don't consider you a journalist," it said in a statement, after banning two Rebel staff from press events in recent weeks.

Cue a national outcry over free speech. Cue Wednesday's backtracking of the ban: "It's clear we made a mistake," the premier's communications director said.

Indeed. No government has any business deciding who's press and who's not — least of all the Alberta NDP, which has enough problems as it is, chiefly the decimation of oil prices and its own dismal approval ratings.

In Alberta, reporters and photographers don't even have to be part of the provincial legislative assembly's press gallery (an organization of accredited media) in order to cover news conferences, said gallery president and Calgary Herald reporter Darcy Henton in a statement. He added the gallery's support for "the right of journalists to provide vigorous and diverse" political coverage.

That was a welcome shout-out from the "smug mainstream media" to The Rebel, which posted the statement. Elsewhere on its site, Faith Goldy, a former Sun personality, parodied the fiasco with a "coming out" video as a "real journalist." It's not funny (as she hopes) because it makes fun of LGTBQ people. It's funny because there's no definition of a "real" journalist.

This is an open and free profession. I don't have a degree in it. Anyone can start a news site. In Ottawa, BuzzFeed and Vice are in the press gallery. What I, or anyone, think of The Rebel's ideological slant is immaterial. It should have access to the government, like the rest of us, barring it doesn't break the law.

But the NDP? It can't even practise its own inclusive lefty idealism. Now it's having to review its media policies to save face, and The Rebel (predictably) has threatened to sue. But hey, that's its right.

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metro LIFE

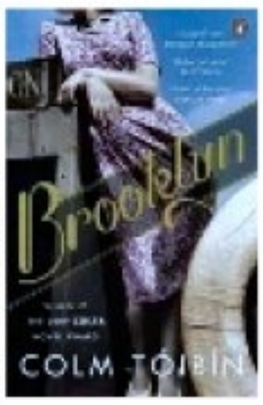
Your essential daily news

Original 1929 Oscar cast to make statuettes awarded in 2016

THE BOOK VS. THE MOVIE WHICH ONE IS BETTER?

Hollywood's gone book crazy if the latest Oscar noms are anything to go by. Six movies in the best film, best director and best adapted screenplay categories were originally books. Which prompts us to ask the age-old question: which is better, the movie or the book? TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

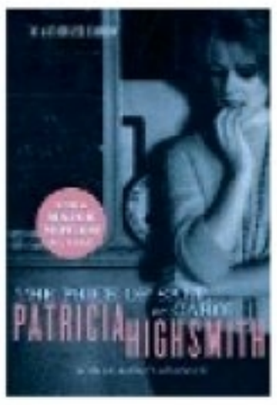
1 Brooklyn



Based on the 2009 novel by Colm Toibin

Brooklyn is one of those rare cases in which the novel and film complement each other rather than compete. The film brings a vibrant life to the story, while the novel allows for greater immersion and intensity. Each satisfies on its own, but they're best taken together.

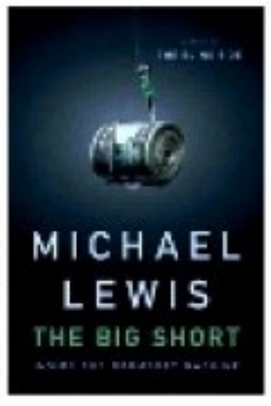
2 Carol



Based on the 1952 novel The Price of Salt by Patricia Highgate

Anyone who sees Carol should also be required to read The Price of Salt, to fully absorb the impact and significance of the story as well as the depth of what these people feel for one another. It's a love that defies convention but also one that is just like anyone else's.

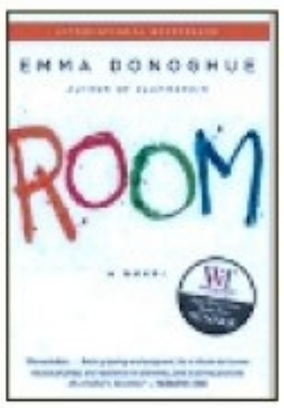
3 The Big Short



Based on the 2010 book by Michael Lewis

It's always tempting to come down on the side of the book, but a topic of such supreme denseness (we're talking subprime mortgages, collateralized debt obligations and credit-default swaps) needs all the help it can get. So the movie entertains and enlightens more than the book ever could.

4 Room



Based on the 2012 book by Emma Donoghue

The book asks more from us as all books do: to use our imaginations and interpret what we read through our own experience. But the movie was fantastic and evoked all of the emotions experienced while reading the book: fear, disgust, incredulity. So it's a bit of tie.

5 The Revenant

Based in part on the novel The Revenant by Michael Punke

The differences between the book and film are so significant as to raise questions about filmmaker Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu's motivations. Why a climactic showdown, rather than the ending of the book? Why change Glass's back story to include a native wife and son? The book is a subtler, stronger piece of storytelling, but there is no denying the primal force of the film.

6 The Martian

Based on the 2014 book by Andy Weir

The page-turning plot transfers largely intact from author Weir's page to director Ridley Scott's screen. The movie is the better version of the story. Scott is a master at putting sci-fi sagas and worlds onto the screen, having previously done so with Blade Runner, Alien and Prometheus.

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The many ways to look at a fat girl

SHORT STORIES

Mona Awad gets personal about body image in book

Sue Carter
For Metro Canada

Anyone who has ever deleted an unflattering selfie or faced the mirror with a sigh will relate to some aspect of Mona Awad's series of connected stories, 13 Ways of Looking at a Fat Girl, published by Penguin Canada.

Drawing from personal experience, Awad digs deep into the complexities of body image, and how we see others and ourselves.

She first explored the topic through personal essays, but found real freedom and honesty through fiction. Told through 13 vignettes, the often-funny stories follow tough-minded yet vulnerable suburbanite Lizzie as she transforms from a "fat girl" teenager to a food-obsessed thin woman.

The book travels with young Lizzie from Misery Saga (a.k.a. Mississauga) and the goth clubs of Toronto's Queen West neighbourhood to an adulthood marked by body-conscious health clubs and boutique clothing stores.

"There are all these different ways in which body image affects our lives, and certainly that what I observed with other people who have struggled with this," Awad says.

"I was interested in how body image affected the dynamics in friendship, and how it affected your relationship to sex, to your husband, to your mother, to clothes and food and yourself, and how that might change — or not — depending on how you feel about your body."

Although Lizzie loses weight and develops into a thin adult, her former self never completely vanishes.

She later returns to the plus-sized clothing store Addition Elle, the scene of much teenage distress and frustration with its proliferation of glittery, rhinestoned animal-patterned shirts.

In a short, taut story named after the store, Awad deftly sums up the complex emotions many of us face at one point or another in a dressing room.

"It's just clothes but the relationship is just so charged," says Awad.

Mona Awad's 13 stories tell the tale of suburbanite Lizzie as she transforms from 'fat girl ' to thin woman. CONTRIBUTED

"Addition Elle really unlocked something for me. There's a lot of anxiety there, a lot of desire, and hope and frustration."

Awad, who grew up in Montreal and Toronto, and is now pursuing her PhD in creative writing and English literature at the University of Denver, wrote 13 Ways of Looking at a Fat Girl in part because she observed a lack of narratives that handle body image in a way she desired.

"I wanted to explore the underside and complications around transformation, and ask the question: when you change, can you really change? Do you leave a former self behind, or is it still informing the way you are in the world and interact with people, and the way you see yourself?"

Sue Carter is the editor at Quill & Quire magazine.

GOSSIP BRIEFS

Kate uses HuffPo to launch mental health project

Prince William's wife Kate guest-edited the British edition of news website The Huffington Post on Wednesday to help raise awareness of the "devastating" issue of children's mental health.

The mother-of-two launched a global initiative, Young Minds Matter, as she took over the site, writing:

"For too long we have been embarrassed to admit when our children need emotional or psychiatric help."

Kate said that she and William, the second in line to the British throne, "would not hesitate to seek help" for their children, adding that they hoped "to encourage George and Charlotte to speak about their feelings."

The Duchess of Cambridge became involved with children's charities shortly after her 2011 wedding, work that has touched on issues such as addiction and family breakdown.

AFP

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MEMOIR

Shatner on his frenemy Nimoy

William Shatner, right, is shown in 1978 with his Star Trek co-star Leonard Nimoy. JLR/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The walls and shelves inside William Shatner's office are covered with the kinds of memorabilia you'd expect from someone who's served for over 50 years as a pop-culture icon.

Shatner's latest memoir, Leonard: My Fifty-Year Friendship with a Remarkable Man, came out Tuesday. In the book, Shatner details his relationship with Star Trek comrade Leonard Nimoy, who died a year ago.

The 84-year-old actor-writer spoke with The Associated Press last week about his on-again, off-again relationship with Nimoy from behind the desk in his office.

Why did you want to write a book about your relationship with Leonard?

It marks the period at the end of this long paragraph of our lives together. I thought I needed to say this for myself, but it may be of interest to other people.

Why do you think you and Leonard were close?

We were so much alike and had so much in common — both in our personal and professional history — that we were able to speak on terms that we both understood. I never had that before. (He was) a brother I never had. That's how he and I referred to each other.

Eventually, Leonard and you weren't on speaking terms with each other. How do you feel about not having any closure with him before his death?

I feel a great deal of sadness. Here was this great friend who had a problem with me, and I don't know what the problem is — no matter what I tried to do. Leonard had done that more than once with other people. It was his means of protecting himself, in some manner. I don't know what it was. It'll remain a mystery.

How do you feel about criticisms from people that this book capitalizes on his death and you shouldn't have written it?

I don't understand that. Why not? It happened to me. It didn't happen to them. I have made many stories, anecdotes and dramatic readings of things that have happened to me. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BOOK EXCERPT **THE WIDOW BY FIONA BARTON**

‘My husband died three weeks ago’

Fiona Barton JUSTYN WILLIS

England’s Fiona Barton is an international media trainer working in developing countries and was formerly a senior writer for the Daily Mail. She also worked as a news editor at the Daily Telegraph and as chief reporter at The Mail on Sunday. It was her experience covering notorious crimes and trials that inspired her to write The Widow, her first novel. The Widow, now in stores, is a psychological thriller that gives an acute portrait of a marriage in crisis.

I can hear the sound of her crunching up the path. Heavy footed in high heels. She’s almost at the door, hesitating and smoothing her hair out of her face. Nice outfit. Jacket with big buttons, decent dress underneath and glasses perched on her head. Not a Jehovah’s Witness or the Labour party. Must be a reporter, but not the usual. She’s my second one today — fourth this week, and it’s only Wednesday. I bet she says, ‘I’m sorry to bother you at such a difficult time.’ They all say that and put on that stupid face. Like they care.

I’m going to wait to see if she rings twice. The man this morning didn’t. Some are obviously bored to death with trying. They leave as soon as they take their finger off the bell, marching back down the path as fast as they can, into their cars and away. They can tell their bosses they knocked on the door but she wasn’t there. Pathetic.

She rings twice. Then knocks loudly in that rap-rap-rappity-rap way. Like a policeman. She sees me looking through the gap at the side of my net curtains and smiles this big smile. A Hollywood smile, my mum used to say. Then she knocks again.

When I open the door, she hands me the bottle of milk from the doorstep and says, ‘You don’t want to leave that out, it’ll go off. Shall I come in? Have you got the kettle on?’

I can’t breathe, let alone speak. She smiles again, head on one side. ‘I’m Kate,’ she says. ‘Kate Waters, a reporter from the Daily Post.’

‘I’m ~’ I start, suddenly realizing she hasn’t asked.

‘I know who you are, Mrs Taylor,’ she says. Unspoken are the words: You are the story. ‘Let’s not stand out here,’ she says. And as she talks, somehow, she’s come in.

I feel too stunned by the turn of events to speak and she takes my silence as permission to go into the kitchen with the bottle of milk and make me a cup of tea. I follow her in — it’s not a big kitchen and we’re a bit of a squeeze as she bustles about, filling the kettle and opening all my cupboards, looking for cups and sugar. I just stand there, letting it all happen.

She’s chatting about the units. ‘What a lovely fresh-looking kitchen — I wish mine looked like this. Did you put it in?’

It feels like I’m talking to a friend. It isn’t how I thought it would be, talking to a reporter. I thought it would be like being questioned by the police. Thought it would be an ordeal, an interrogation. That’s what my husband, Glen, said. But it isn’t, somehow.

I say, ‘Yes, we chose white doors and red handles because it looked so clean.’ I’m standing in my house discussing kitchen units with a reporter. Glen would’ve had a fit.

She says, ‘Through here, is it?’ and I open the door to the living room.

I’m not sure if I want her here or not — not sure how I feel. It doesn’t feel right to protest now — she’s just sitting and chatting with a cup of tea in her hand. It’s funny, I’m quite enjoying the attention.

I get a bit lonely inside this house now that Glen is gone.

And she seems to be in charge of things. It’s quite nice really, to have someone in charge of me again. I was beginning to panic that I’d have to cope with everything on my own, but Kate Waters is saying she’ll sort everything out.

All I have to do is tell her all about my life, she says.

My life? She doesn’t really want to know about me. She hasn’t walked up my path to hear about Jean Taylor. She wants to know the truth about him. About Glen. My husband.

You see, my husband died three weeks ago. Knocked down by a bus just outside Sainsbury’s. He was there one minute, giving me grief about what sort of cereal I should’ve bought, and the next, dead on the road. Head injuries, they said. Dead, anyway. I just stood there and looked at him, lying there. People were running round finding blankets and there was a bit of blood on the pavement. Not much blood though. He would’ve been glad. He didn’t like any sort of mess.

Everyone was very kind and trying to stop me seeing his body, but I couldn’t tell them I was glad he’d gone. No more of his nonsense.

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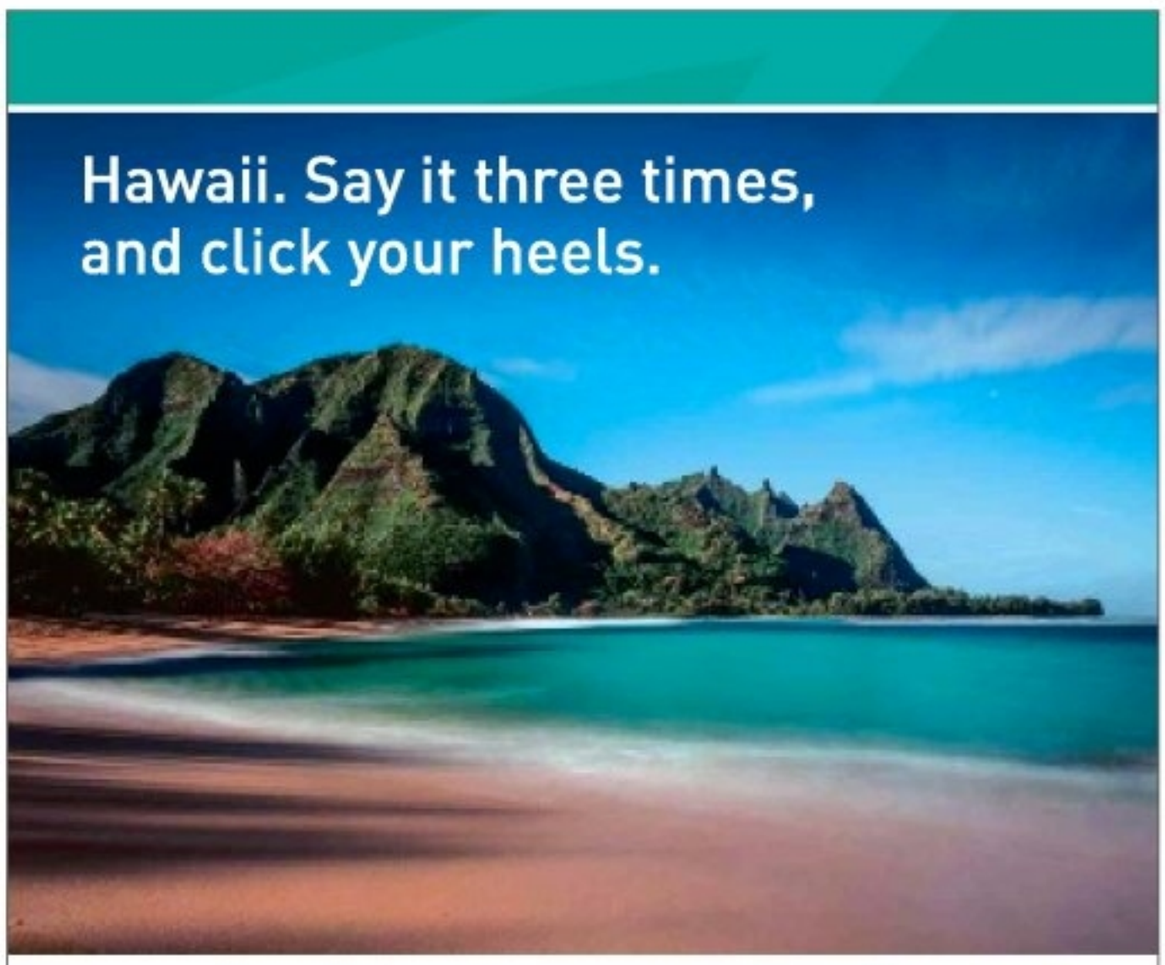

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WESTJET

From nest egg to down payment

HOME OWNERSHIP

Does it make financial sense to withdraw from RRSPs?

Chris Lackner

Are you buying a home sweet home or a money pit? Raiding RRSPs to purchase property is all a matter of perspective — and age.

Withdrawing from RRSPs early can drastically undercut retirement income, according to financial experts. But some of that risk is mitigated for prospective land owners.

The first-time homebuyer tax credit is a viable mechanism for people to withdraw RRSP contributions for their down payment, says Chris Buttigieg, senior manager of wealth planning strategy for BMO Wealth Management.

"Home ownership in Canada hasn't been a bad investment," Buttigieg says. "For first-time homebuyers, and in particular young people, coming up with funds for a down payment is a stretch — especially in this environment (of) student debt, and (unstable) employment."

It's all about hitting that 20 per cent down payment mark, says Charmaine Huber, a certified money coach, and TV host of Your Money Your Business. Homebuyers who fall under that threshold face a three to five per cent premium from the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation. So accessing RRSPs can save money, at least at face value, for first-time house hunters.

The homebuyers' plan allows for a maximum, tax-free RRSP withdrawal of $25,000 — which can mean as much as $50,000 for a couple with ample registered retirement savings. But withdrawing RRSP contributions is only fiscally sound if repayment is prompt and consistent, Huber explains.

"There are penalties for not meeting your (annual) payments," she says, noting homebuyers have to start repaying their RRSP two years after a purchase. "If you don't meet you minimums… you'll be paying more in taxes."

Huber tells buyers' to craft a "saving plan for repayment" from Day 1. Both experts' advice is to work ahead of the 15-year term of annual minimum payments. Unlike new RRSP contributions, these repayments do not reduce yearly taxable income, Buttigieg explains. Plus, losing out on your RRSP tax-free interest can be costly. "You lose that compounding effect," Huber says. "You have to stay disciplined, save, and make sure you pay that money back (quickly)… By default, people tend to focus on that minimum. (But) they won't be doing themselves any favours."

For those not buying a first home, any RRSP withdrawal is considered taxable T4 income, and could even push an individual into a higher tax bracket, Buttigieg explains.

An inaugural primary residence is one thing, but Buttigieg cautions against plundering RRSPs for a vacation property, secondary home or rental property. It's called a retirement savings plan for a reason.

More Canadians should heed his advice. A 2015 Bank of Nova Scotia survey found that 4 out of 10 Canadians access their RRSPs before retirement. While 16 per cent were first-time home purchasers, others withdrew their retirement nest egg to cover things like vacations, renovations, appliances, and even day-to-day expenses.

As people age, tapping into RRSPs for a first-time property makes increasingly less sense.

"You should be aiming to retire with no mortgage or debt at all," says Huber. "If you got started later in life and it's the only way to get into the market, you may have to do it… but don't take money out if you're, say 60, and retiring in the next five years."

Repaying RRSPs past 71 can be problematic, Buttigieg adds. That's the age Canadians are required to liquidate or convert RRSPs to a registered retired income fund. Any RRSP withdrawals need to be repaid fully at that point, or they become taxable income.

For first-time homebuyers, tapping into RRSPs is an option as coming up with funds for a down payment is a stretch. ISTOCK

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metro HOME
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Sotheby's to auction off last of the Mitford sisters' objects d'art

MEET THE CONDO

A master-planned community

Project overview

The Lloyd is the third of four towers to be built at Polygon's master-planned community of Windsor Gate near Coquitlam Town Centre. Pre-sale of this high-rise will begin in March when the sale centre opens to the public. Residents will be able to choose from three designer colour schemes.

Location and transit

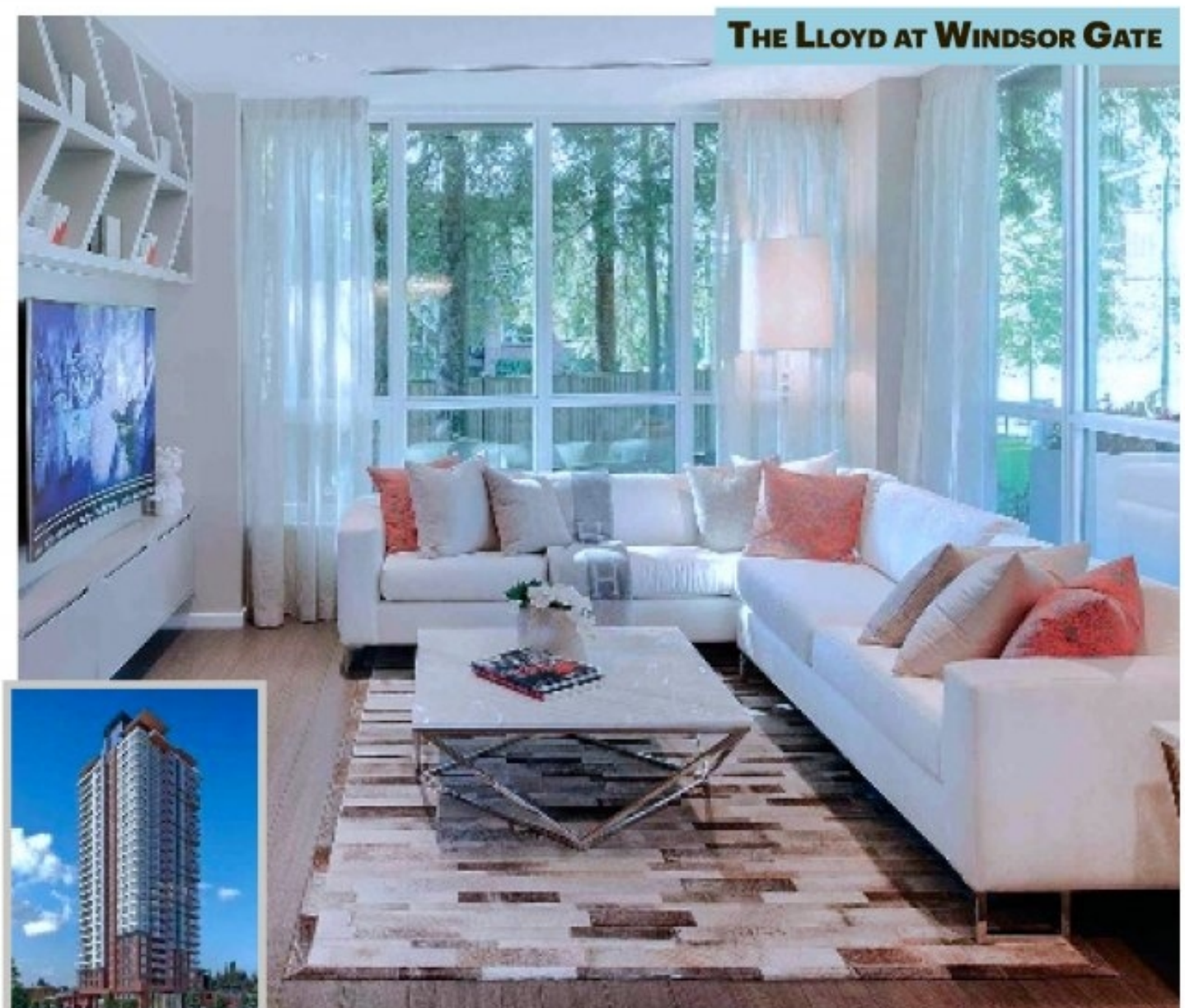
For commuters, Greater Vancouver is easily accessible via the West Coast Express station. There is also the future Evergreen Line, which will link Coquitlam to the existing SkyTrain system. This growing city has over 80 municipal parks and natural areas, giving residents many options to hike, bike, fish or camp.

In the neighbourhood

This master-planned community is situated in a quiet neighbourhood, where natural amenities like the Coquitlam River and Lafarge Lake are steps away. Also in close proximity are the library, top schools, eateries and performing arts venues. For the golf enthusiast, there's the Westwood Plateau Golf and Country Club.

Housing Amenities

The Lloyd residents will enjoy membership to the exclusive Nakoma Club, which features 18,000 square feet of resort-style amenities. The Lloyd itself will house a fitness studio looking onto a landscaped green space. Suites feature open plan layouts and have wood-style laminate flooring and custom cabinetry.



THE LLOYD AT WINDSOR GATE

CONTRIBUTED

NEED TO KNOW

What: The Lloyd at Windsor Gate
Builder: Polygon Lloyd Tower Ltd., Polygon Windsor Gate Ltd.
Architect: Rositch Hemphill Architects
Location: Coquitlam
Building: High-rise tower
Suites: Two bedrooms and two bath homes, three bedrooms and two bath homes, two bedrooms and den
Status: Under construction
Occupancy: Fall 2018
Sales centre: 3096 Windsor Gate, Coquitlam
Phone: 604-942-8416
Website: polyhomes.com

PROJECT

Create your own mini garden with these DIY terrariums

Terrariums continue to trend, and for the plant-obsessed urban dweller they are a great small-space solution. A miniature garden under glass is a fun and easy way to add a little greenery to an indoor space. A great gift for a green thumb, all that's required are a few materials from your local garden shop to create a stylish tabletop garden.

Step 1: Gather and shop for the supplies

- Glass containers
- Plants
- Activated charcoal
- Soil
- Small stones or pebbles

Step 2: Add a layer of stones to the container

Add a 1" (2.5-centimetre) layer of stones or pebbles to a clean, dry glass container. The stones will help provide drainage.

Step 3: Add a layer of charcoal to the container

Add a ½" (about 1 centimetre) layer of charcoal on top of the stones. This will help keep the soil free from mould.

Step 4: Add soil to the container

Add enough soil to the container to allow your plants to fit comfortably.

Step 5:Add plants

Place your plants in the soil. Add a little extra soil to cover the roots and cover the plants evenly. Place the terrarium in location that gets indirect light. Water lightly and enjoy.

Tip: Terrariums tend to thrive in a well-lit space with indirect light. Don't overwater. If the plants look a little droopy or the soil is dry it is time to lightly water.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Terrariums are still on-trend and are a great way to bring some green into a small, urban space.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

The new nursery for 2016

TRENDS

Everything from gender neutral to baby glam goes

Baby, it's a brand new year. And when it comes to creating the perfect sleep space for little ones, there are more fun options than ever. Styles range from haute to homespun, vintage to vanguard. A look at some of the best:

Interior designer Naomi Alon urges parents to use baby rooms as a space to let their own imaginations run wild. HANDOUT

> **"The nursery is just as much about the parents as it is about the baby, and making it a place where mom and dad feel comfortable is key.**
>
> Naomi Alon, Interior designer

Blurring the lines

Traditional parameters like gender-specific motifs and colours, and room-specific furnishings, are giving way to a more free-spirited approach. Designers are deploying to the nursery dressers, credenzas, art, lighting, mirrors and seating more typically found in grown-up rooms like the master, dining or living room.

Joanna Gick and Jennifer O'Dowd, interior designers in Scottsdale, Ariz., like to use vintage dressers, toys and books as nursery inspiration. Art's a big element, too.

"Gallery walls seem to be a hot trend," Gick says. "The fun thing about them is they're totally customizable to the child's interests, and easy to swap out as they grow. We like to use mixed media — prints as well as wood and metal sculptures — to create a really interesting gallery."

Baby glam

Parents-to-be should view the baby's room as a place to let their own imaginations fly, says Naomi Alon, owner of the Irvine, Calif.-based Little Crown Interiors.

"I encourage my clients to think about the nursery as their inner child's fantasy space," she says.

"This is the one room in their home where they can get away with neon pink wallpaper or an over-the-top chandelier. The nursery is just as much about the parents as it is about the baby, and making it a place where mom and dad feel comfortable is key."

In one of Alon's favourite projects, a nursery in Newport Beach, Calif., she used pink and gold damask wallpaper, a baroque mirror, organza furniture skirts and a big fluffy rug to create a glamorous, girly confection.

Los Angeles duo Emily Current and Meritt Elliot designed gold, arrow-shaped lamps and finials, and gold-woven storage bins for their new Pottery Barn Kids collection. A bold, black-and-white diamond pattern graces a quilt. RH Baby & Child's new collection features upholstered cribs resembling wing chairs; conversion kits allow them to be turned into beds down the road. There's a big selection of chandeliers, too.

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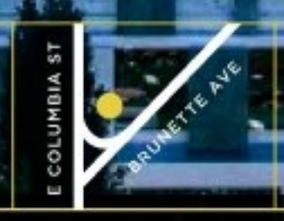

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metro SPORTS

Lionel Messi scored his 300th and 301st La Liga goals in Barcelona's 3-1 win over Sporting Gijon

Desjardins on the hot seat

NHL

Canucks coach says he is still focused on winning

Cam Tucker
Metro | Vancouver

The wolves are out for Willie Desjardins.

After Monday's disappointing loss to the Minnesota Wild, the Vancouver Canucks head coach suggested the responsibility was on him for such a poor start when his group was throttled in the first period two days after getting thoroughly beaten by a Toronto Maple Leafs lineup that largely resembled a minor-league team.

There had been criticisms toward Desjardins dating back to last year's playoffs and his deployment through two games of the Sedin twins. His usage of players in situations such as offensive zone faceoffs after TV timeouts on home ice still warrants criticism.

But the recent disasters against Toronto and Minnesota have accelerated the heating process for the public hot seat that Desjardins now sits on.

With the trade deadline now less than two weeks away and the Canucks trying to bust out of a five-game home losing skid, they welcome the red-hot Anaheim Ducks on Thursday.

As for the recent horrid starts, the players were taking responsibility.

"I don't believe it's ever up to a coach to get individual players ready," said Jannik Hansen.

But exactly what good could come of firing Desjardins at this point?

2.30

The Canucks are second last in scoring at 2.30 goals per game.

With this roster, what could be accomplished from axing the coach while there are still games to play?

This is a roster that has numerous deficiencies and is second-last in the NHL in goals per game at 2.30.

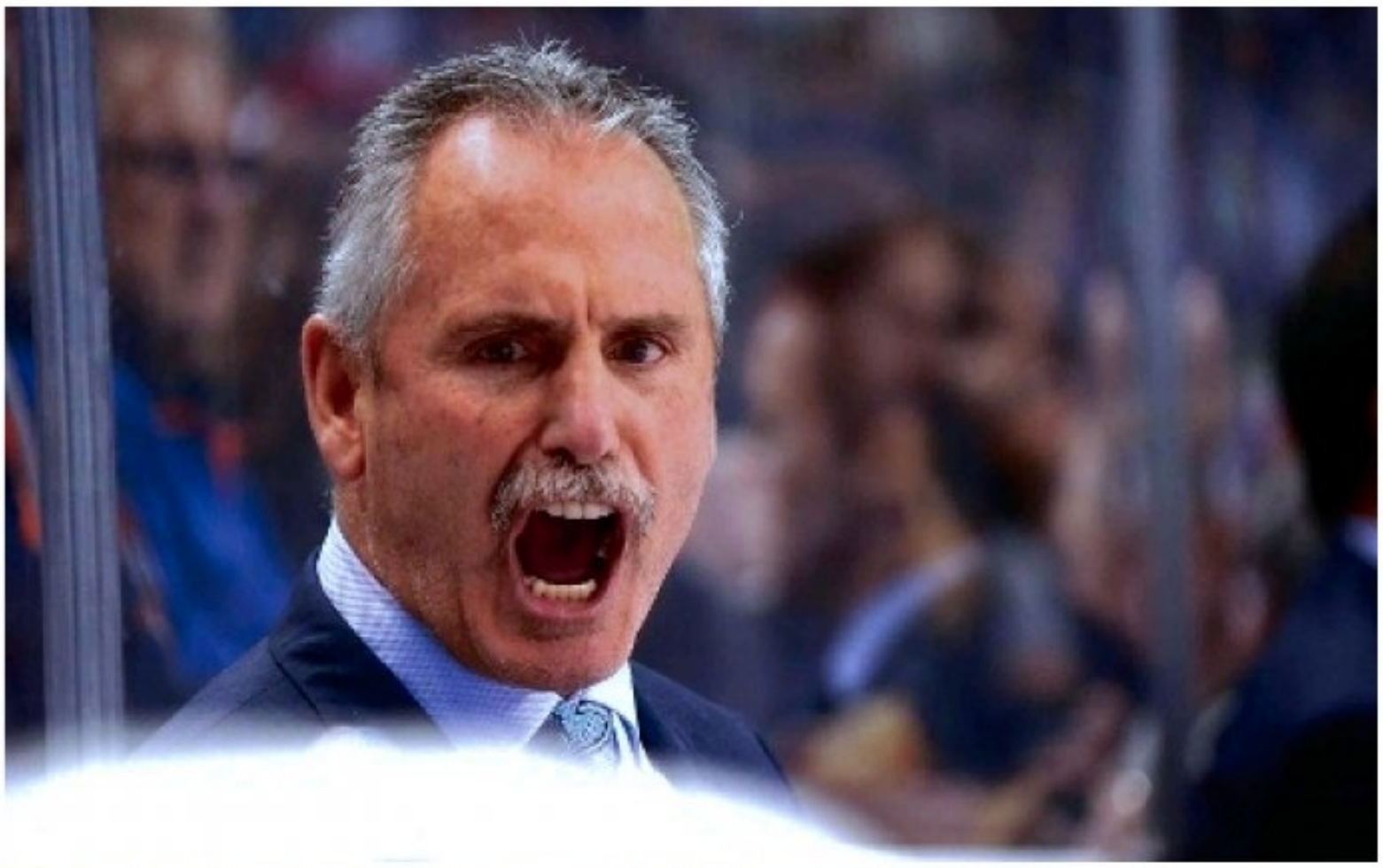
This is a roster that includes two 19-year-olds in their earliest stages of NHL development.

This is a roster without Alex Edler due to injury, and Matt Bartkowski and Alex Biega as its bottom pairing.

This is a roster that could possibly see pending unrestricted free agents Radim Vrbata and Dan Hamhuis dealt at the deadline as part of a rebuild so many fans seem to be calling for.

"My focus on every game is to find a way to win that game," said Desjardins.

"And I think that's how you approach it with the players."



Willie Desjardins has been heavily scrutinized since last year's playoffs. BRUCE BENNETT/GETTY IMAGES

> **I don't believe it's ever up to a coach to get individual players ready.** Jannik Hansen

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Olynyk's now an ambassador

BASKETBALL

Boston Celtics star hasn't forgotten his Canadian roots

Cam Tucker
Metro | Vancouver

Kevin Hanson gave it a shot. Who could blame him? As head coach of the UBC men's basketball team, Hanson tried to recruit Kamloops, B.C., product Kelly Olynyk to the Thunderbirds.

Eyes for such a talent at the high school level, however, weren't just exclusive to one particular local coach and Olynyk eventually took his talents to NCAA Division I with the Gonzaga Bulldogs.

"I knew him for so many years, it was one of those things — there was an outside chance and he was looking around, shopping around and all of a sudden, the bigger schools started coming in," Hanson told reporters Wednesday. "I think he would've looked great in blue and gold."

Maybe Olynyk to the Thunderbirds as a player didn't come to fruition, despite the efforts of Hanson. But previous connections have brought Olynyk and UBC together at last.

A graduate of South Kamloops Secondary School and now a key member of the Boston Celtics and Canada's national basketball team, the 24-year-old Olynyk was officially named as an ambassador for the CIS Men's Basketball Final 8 Championships, which take part at UBC from March 17-20. His connection to the tournament automatically lends it the star power of an NBA player that once dominated at the provincial high school level in B.C.

> **I think he would've looked great in blue and gold.**
> Kevin Hanson fantasizing about signing Kelly Olynyk

"Kelly Olynyk, it's a great name, he's a great ambassador," said Hanson. "What he's done for basketball here on the West Coast ... Kelly's a close one for me. We recruited him. I knew his family. His dad actually recruited me when I was coming out of high school so I've had a strong relationship with their family for a lot of years.

"For me, personally, it's special to have Kelly involved."

As an ambassador, Olynyk will work to spread the word and promote the competition while still playing with the Celtics. "It's basketball and it's Canada," said Olynyk. "CIS definitely has a special place in my heart."

Kelly Olynyk of the Celtics was named an ambassador for the 2016 CIS Men's Basketball Final 8 Championship, which will be held at UBC in Vancouver this March. UBC

IN BRIEF

Nike dumps Pacquiao

Boxer Manny Pacquiao's comments disparaging gays have cost him his contract with apparel giant Nike. The company issued a release Wednesday saying it has dropped the Filipino fighter after he was quoted as saying gay people "are worse than animals."

Nike called Pacquiao's comments "abhorrent" and said the company strongly opposes discrimination of any kind. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ronaldo stars as Madrid win first leg against Roma

Cristiano Ronaldo ended his away scoring drought with an impressive second-half goal as Real Madrid won 2-0 at Roma on Wednesday in the first leg of the Round of 16 in the Champions League. The victory also marked a successful debut for Zinedine Zidane as Madrid's manager in the elite competition.

The night's other first-leg match saw Wolfsburg beat AA Ghent 3-2 in Belgium.

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OMG: NETHERLANDS OPENS "POOP BANK"

Dutch researchers have now opened the country's first "poop bank" in a rare and cutting-edge branch of medicine to treat people with chronic gut infections.

"Our poop bank will help give doctors and hospitals access to transplants of fecal matter," Ed Kuijper, professor of microbiology at Leiden University, told AFP.

The Netherlands Donor Feces Bank (NDFB) will collect, store and distribute the stools necessary to help with such transplants.

Often this is the "only solution for people suffering from chronic intestinal infections, and in particular Clostridium difficile (CD)," a bacteria which can develop in patients particularly after lengthy and heavy courses of antibiotics, Kuijper said.

"Certain antibiotics destroy intestinal flora which allows bacteria to develop and spread," he explained.

"Transplants of fecal matter allow healthy bacteria to be put back into the body, which then spread in the intestines and recreate healthy flora in the gut."

There are about 3,000 people diagnosed with CD annually in the Netherlands, and about five percent of cases become chronic. About three to four transplants of fecal material are carried out in the country every month.

Donors must be "in good health, neither too overweight or too skinny and must have good intestinal flora," said Kuijper.

Unlike in the U.S., where the first two poop banks were opened last year, donors are not paid. AFP

Find the words:

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WEEKNIGHTS 7:30

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS by Sally Brompton

Aries March 21 - April 20
You should feel an easing of the restrictions, especially financial restrictions, that you have been laboring under in recent weeks. However, that is not an excuse to go on a spree.

Taurus April 21 - May 21
You have important things to do and only a limited amount of time in which to do them. But sharing the load with friends and colleagues will mean sharing the rewards as well.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
Keep a cool head and don't let anyone tempt you to do something silly. The planets will put some way-out ideas into your head over the next 24 hours but, on this occasion, they are the kind of ideas you must reject.

Cancer June 22 - July 23
You know you're in the right and you know that no one can stop you from following the path you've chosen to take. So why do you still hesitate?

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
Money worries seem to be on your mind a lot of late but there is no reason to panic. What is the worst that could happen? And if it did happen, would it really be so bad? Expect some positive financial news.

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
You may think you understand what makes a partner tick but something will happen that makes you realize just how little you really know about them. Never mind. You will get the chance to know them better.

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Get over the idea that you must do it all on your own, especially on the work front. No matter how ambitious you are you'll reach a point when you can't go further without assistance. Ask for it and you will get it.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Know what you're getting yourself in for before backing someone else's creative venture. Just because you trust them does not mean they know what they're talking about.

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Minor disagreements could easily get out of hand over the few days, so think before you speak and, if someone says something you do not agree with, don't make an issue of it.

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
It may seem as if the world is ganging up on you but that is an illusion and you know it. Others are not blaming you for what has gone wrong, they are just pointing out where they think you could have done better.

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Don't worry if your cashflow is weak, because when the Sun changes signs tomorrow you will find new ways to make money. Of course, that will only be of benefit if you don't find ways to immediately spend it!

Pisces Feb. 20 - March 20
The Sun enters your sign tomorrow you will enjoy a surge of energy. Today, however, you should take things easy and make your plans.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green
Every row, column and box contains 1-9

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RECIPE Sweet Corn Fritters

PHOTO: MAYA VISNYEI

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

Using pantry staples and a few fresh ingredients, these corn fritters remind us of the goodness of summer's sweet corn on a chilly, wintery night.

Ready in
Prep time: 10 minutes
Total time: 30 minutes
Makes: 14 silver dollar-sized cakes

Ingredients
- 2 cups frozen corn
- 2 eggs
- 1 zucchini, grated
- 1 carrot, grated
- 1/4 cup thinly sliced green onion, plus more for garnish
- 1/2 cup spelt flour
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 2 Tbsp grape seed oil

Directions
1. In a medium sized mixing bowl, whisk the eggs and corn together. Stir in the carrot, zucchini and green onion. Add the flour and salt and mix well.
2. Heat oil in a large skillet over medium heat and then drop heaping tablespoons of batter into skillet. Press down on the batter to form a pancake.
3. Cook the pancake until it's golden brown and then flip and cook on the other side.
4. Remove pancakes from the pan and place on paper towel. Serve with sour cream, a sprinkle of green onions and a side salad.

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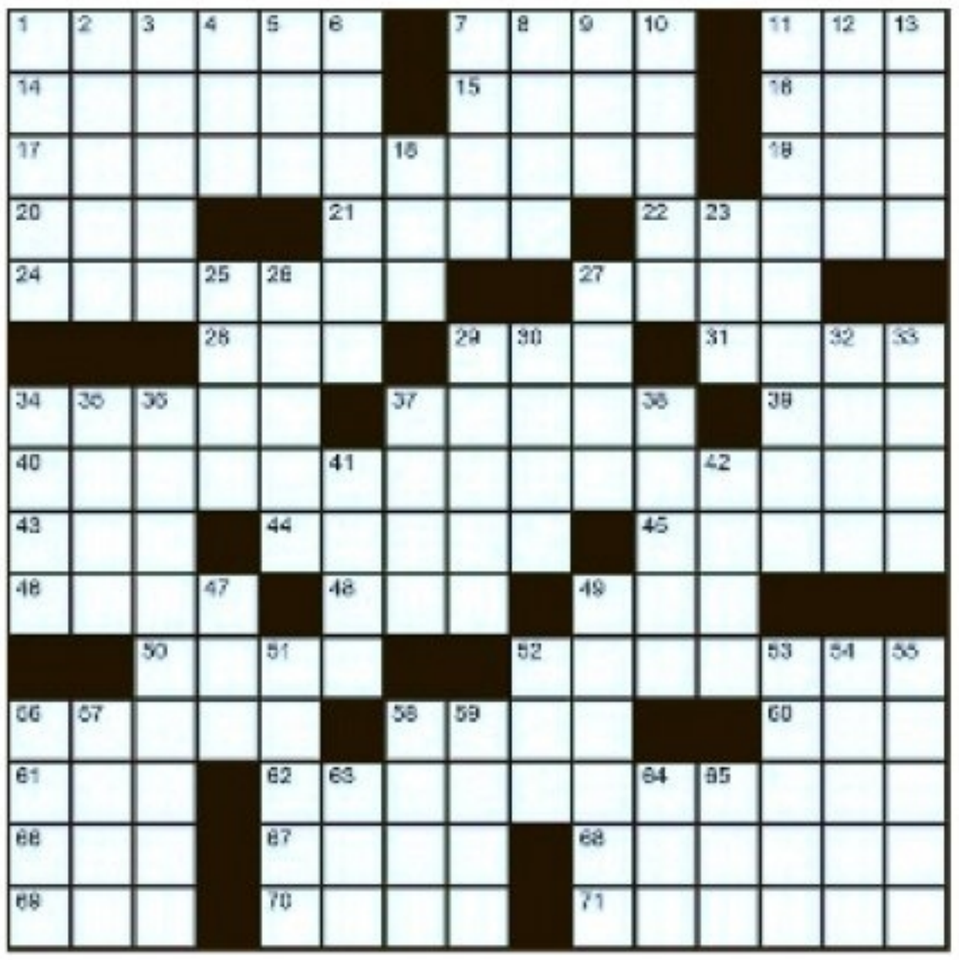
CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



ACROSS
1. '80290 _': Brand new album by #7-Across which re-imagines hit tunes from 1980 to 1990
7. Alan _, Canadian singer/songwriter
11. Fellowship [abbr.]
14. Shakespeare: King of Naples in The Tempest
15. 'Chick' suffix
16. Ms. Zadora
17. Shreddies: 2 wds.
19. _ tree
20. Eden lady
21. Life planet perhaps
22. "Someday" on #1-Across was a 1986 hit for #7-Across' band _ Tiger
24. Canadian distiller, Joseph E. _ (b.1841 - d.1919)
27. Nobleman
28. Ballroom judge Mr. Goodman
29. Whoopi Goldberg's Oscar-winning role in "Ghost" (1990), _ Mae Brown
31. "Star Trek" episode, _ Time
34. 1940s jazz
37. Canadian _ Company
39. Trellis plant
40. Area for 'Arrivals' or 'Departures' on CBC show "Hello Goodbye": 2 wds.
43. Pique
44. Symbolic pole
45. Basket-making fibre
46. Virtually
48. "The _ Squad"
49. Mister, in India
50. Retain
52. Error
56. Orange variety
58. Plaintiff
60. Mariner's dir.
61. Mode's 2-word intro
62. "Don't You Forget About Me" on #1-Across was originally a 1985 hit for what band?: 2 wds.
66. 'Oldes' partners in pub names
67. _ out a living
68. In, in other words
69. Established
70. Like Mother Nature's morning coat
71. Music enhancer

DOWN
1. Rushes
2. Student: French
3. _ _ suit (Didn't dress casually)
4. 'Salt' suffix
5. U.S. intelligence org.
6. Sweater sleeve style
7. Jamie of "M*A*S*H"
8. Suggested nutritional amts.
9. 'Velvet' suffix
10. Lemon _ (Food flavourer)
11. Wrigley's gum flavour
12. Petroleums
13. Photography needs, briefly
18. Slamming sound!
23. Farm field
25. Lunchtime lumpful
26. Transplant in the greenhouse
27. Catherine _ (Wife of Henry VIII)
29. Chose
30. Regard
32. President's _ Office
33. Reality star Ms. Richards (Paris Hilton's aunt)
34. "Mission: Impossible" actress Barbara
35. Emerald entity
36. When #17-Across gets served usually
37. Mr. Preminger
38. Mideast chieftains [var. sp.]
41. Lark about
42. Ancient Egyptian goddess
47. NHL official
49. Sea nymphs
51. Alleviated
52. Funnyman Mr. Brooks
53. Luciano Pavarotti's voice
54. Provide, as with a trait
55. Basil/pine nuts sauce
56. T.O. baseballers
57. Sailing side
58. Type of diving duck
59. _-daisy
63. 34th Pres.
64. Word: French
65. 'Meteor' suffix

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